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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/25/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [GG](#) [RS](#)  
SUBJECT: RUSSIAN ENVOY ON ABKHAZIA MOVEMENTS

REF: TBILISI 2402

Classified By: CDA Daniel A. Russell. Reasons 1.4 (B/D).

¶1. (C) On September 24, Russian Envoy for the Georgia-Abkhazia conflict Ambassador Chernov shared with us his views on the developments in Abkhazia. He claimed that the September 20 shooting incident occurred in Tqvarcheli, "not in the Kodori Gorge," and noted that this demonstrated once again that the "border" is unclear and the area is poorly controlled by either party (reftel). Chernov estimated that about 80 Chechen fighters seeped into the Abkhazia PKF and stressed that Abkhazia is not a place for Chechens; they should be moved elsewhere. He added that "Chechens should be always busily occupied but not in Abkhazia." Chernov said that all parties, except the Georgians, have agreed to resume the Chuburkhindji talks, and are waiting for Georgia's formal response.

¶2. (C) While admitting that there is little prospect for an early solution to the Abkhazia impasse, Chernov was pleased with the September 20 Berlin meeting of the Friends. The Friends agreed on basic principles, which reduced Georgia's dissatisfaction with the perceived lack of support for the process. The group agreed that now is the time for small but meaningful trust-building measures between Tbilisi and Sukhumi, rather than ambitious settlement plans such as refugee return and status issues which the Georgian side had advocated.

¶3. (SBU) Chernov is scheduled to depart Moscow on October 1 for New York in preparation for the October 10 UNSC session on Abkhazia. He plans to visit Abkhazia before the end of October.  
Russell